FRIENDS OF CHATHAM TRACTION

Update 37

11th August 2016

In The Summertime

Remember this? Piling on to a Strand-bound 5 or 5A for an afternoon down by the river? I suspect this is a mid-50s view, given that the 8-foot Guy at the terminus might be in M&D colours.... Memories of getting blisters on hands from the paddle boat handles, ice cream from the café on the right, and the very fine steam engine on the miniature railway. And trying to get the seat behind the driver for the ride home!

Small Items Donations

Following the plea in Update 36 we've received some very welcome contributions to our small artefacts collection. Gordon Mackley came up with two Guy Motors promotional items – a Bakelite ashtray and a "Feathers in our Cap" Indian Chief – and a small Bristol radiator badge. Another donor, who will have to remain nameless (!), provided a genuine original Chatham Traction radiator badge which he confessed he illicitly removed from a bus many years ago as a souvenir. He said the donation would salve his conscience after many years of unease, knowing it was now back as near as it was likely to get to its original owner! We have a couple of replicas, but maybe we could use this one on GKE – it may even still carry some original Medway grime!

Gift Aid Update

Last year HMRC amended the recommended wording for Gift Aid declarations. Charities are now required to explain to each donor making a declaration that they "*...need to pay the same amount or more of UK Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax as all charities and community amateur sports clubs will claim on the donor's gifts in a tax year, and that the donor is responsible to pay any difference*". Henceforth all declaration forms will include wording to that effect, and will thus be part of any new gift aid declaration. If you have previously made a declaration we don't think its necessary to ask you to complete a new one. However you may wish to review your annual charity gifts and tax payments in the light of the above wording. Please contact Paul if you have any questions.

Anne Fawcett (formerly Hardy)

We were very saddened to hear back in May of the death of FoCT member Anne, particularly so as she died just a week after re-marrying, to Barry Fawcett, another of our supporters. She was keen on retaining the memories of the "brown buses", and recalled shopping trips with her mother to Featherstones in Rochester, travelling by Traction bus from the Westcourt in Gillingham to St Bart's hospital. Anne, with her first husband Dave, led a youth club I went to back in the 60s, and recalling her experience as a Librarian at Gillingham she had gleefully agreed to help with our archiving exercise when the time came. FoCT received a gift of £450 from contributions made by Anne's family and friends for which we are extremely grateful.

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Welcome New Subscribers

We've gained a number of new subscribers over the past three months or so, which is helping greatly to keep the Friends buoyant. A welcome to you all, and thanks for the continuing support from everyone else. In between the relatively heavy work of compiling HLF bids, a few other things have been in progress. David Swan and Richard Ratcliffe are working to get Alan Page's wonderful paintings bringing us income, whilst Len Randall was foremost in having the familiar Chatham & District logo registered to us as a trademark. The latter move is in support of our aim to become a provider of educational services which will benefit from a recognisable identity. This in turn will complement a refreshed organisation. Master-minded by Wendy Mesher, this is the key output we are seeking by way of an HLF-funded exercise under their Resilient Heritage scheme.

CHATHAM & DISTRICT TRACTION COMPANY

Events – a Push for the 40s

The Trustees have spent some time recently reviewing how we present ourselves at events that we attend. Clearly we need to support purely bus events, but our educational aims mean we should be out in the wider community attending other local events too. We recognised that there's a difference between promoting the project and its aims, and selling merchandise and other items to generate some income. This in turn means questioning how we are equipped and organised and how we are represented and conduct ourselves. Detling was a good lesson in how to get attention from doing something different. Happily we believe we've worked things out now! Some manifestations will, we hope, make an appearance soon.

One of the key elements is having enough people to help erect the marquee/tables/displays in the morning, and take it all down again at the end. Promoting our aims means talking to people. Some folk are naturals for this, others (like me!) have to grow into it. Once you get to realise that most folk don't either run away or hit you its quite fun simply engaging people who show the slightest interest in what we are. Give them a leaflet and then listen to them tell you how a family member once worked on the buses or went to school on them. Or, if they date from after about 1960, explain how people once got on buses at the back. It means spending an hour or two on your feet, but time passes quickly when you're busy.

So, to the point. We're going to the 40s Weekend in the Dockyard, 17th-18th September. Some 1940s-relevant stuff is being assembled – notices, photos, etc. A two-day gig, obviously, so we need enough people to have at least two at our pitch for two days. You'll get in free (we get 10 tickets) and all you have to do is spread the word. Oh, and (optionally) dress up as whatever you like provided its 40s-relevant - CT's version of "Blakey"? A canteen lady?

So please, if you'd like to help our cause and have a bit of fun, use conductor "fun" lines (e.g. "anyone want to pay twice…?"), let Wendy know - 07717 318110; wendymesher@blueyonder.co.uk.

What's next?

- Focus on an improved presence at local Medway events.
- Educational Workshop **October 12th**

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